Region Report - Quarter 4 2014

VATEUR VATSIM Europe Region

This was a busy period with work ongoing in wide ranging areas. Firstly the Europe Region is leading the realization of a brand new web system which we anticipate will help bring pilots and controllers together on a global level; a preview has been provided to the Executive Committee, but work is still ongoing to finalize arrangements and move towards public preview.

We had changes within the Region setup, Christopher Marakis resigned from the position of the Region Membership Director, and we would like to thank him for his dedication on the position the past years. Harry Sugden has been appointed as the new Membership Director of European Region, we all wish him best of luck in this position.

A number of inter-regional meetings and discussions were attended with respect to the Global Rating Policy review, both to provide context for the tabled changes and in order to collect the views of the three Divisions into a single message for transmission back to the Executive Committee.

The majority of time and focus in the latter part of Q4 was spent working alongside the senior managers in VATEUD in extensive meetings and discussions as part of efforts to make the staffing structure more coherent and effective to provide a better service to members and vACC colleagues. The areas where improvement is possible have been identified, and together an implementation plan has been drawn. This is a major project area and its result will be a feature of the VATEUR landscape for years to come. Further information will be released by VATEUD in the coming weeks.

Prospective VFO partners for the divisions, (as per the VATEUR model) were contacted by VATUK's representative, as VATUK is the trial-division, however due to the Christmas period, further work and 'closing the deals' is anticipated in 2015Q1.

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Operations (Florian Harms 841181)	*NEW DIVISION STRUCTURE* Taking over the division lead was coupled with a clear and unadorned review of the functions and management. And we can state it quite simple: our organization is a teenager now – and our organization is still in a setup designed for a small organization. By its structure, the division seems to me like a management authority. Today, this doesn't hit the needs of a community. Furthermore, the different attempts to micro-manage identified problems in drawing new laws and orders without a fruitful discussion about the how-to brought even more instability in the setup. It seem to be free of sense to draw policies without making sure that a) organizations and management teams could comply, and b) the concerned members would continue in their self designed tasks and duties. If we plan a process for e.g. for our suppliers, we have to design the process *with* them. And it simply doesn't make sense to sketch plans without implementing alternative strategies, the needed tools and the communication to let the steps become understandable. In consequence, we are turning things around. Today, VATEUD is on the rim to completely new structure. We are leaving the "directors" position and build up teams, we are inviting all members of our division to participate and to bring their share of knowledge, ideas and work into the division to benefit all. We could see that new strategy as reminiscence to the very beginning of Flight Simulation communities in the times when such great guys as e.g. Eric Ernst designed a fully working Boeing 763 *for* the community of Flight Sim enthusiasts. The new division will be organized in three major and two support teams, taking care of the tasks for pilots, controllers, communication, IT and member matters. Out of the teams we are developing a complete new setup of tools and information for our members offering e.g. training content, events information, and information about changes in the aviation in Europe and so on. The news will be published proactively. To support the mentors and trainers in the local VACC's directly, we are setting up a training scheme able to book for their trainees. It simply doesn't make sense to play with the time of our trainers explaining always the same content to their training. We need them to do the real training session but can't *burn* their time with information that is really equal for every trainee. Basing on this concept, we are shifting the roles in the Division to a broader setup. E.g. out of the ATC Training Team, we are creating a Controller team. Training matters and training support is just one task of that team. Information of the controllers in the division about e.g. new tools, new requests of support and so on. We don't wait until the information is running thru the different VACC channels and therefore start to use direct marketing methods. It is quite clear that this approach certainly needs all hands on deck, and this just can work outside an maybe ancient "managers" or "directors"-role approach. We are one community where every single member can benefit from the knowledge and ideas of all members. And since every single member is a specialist in certain areas, he/she can also work for the community.

SERVICE ON DIVISION LEVEL

This is another important area of action. Today, all mails to e.g. vateud2 runs to his personal email account. If he is unavailable, requests have to wait until he is back on duty. This communication will be reorganized.
With the new Division policies, we are starting to shorten the direct communication lines to gain a better and faster service for our members. Currently we are setting up a Ticketing system that informs a couple of service members about the ticket and let them act as a team. With that system, requests are getting a history and will be easily to track. Every member gets full visibility on the request and its development. Out of this visibility we will be able to communicate the standard requests into either a better publication or in a change of those issues leading to a problem. Out of this strategy we get these pluses: a better, faster reply, a better visibility on standard problems and finally a faster time for our service members to sit on those tasks.

NATIONAL COMMUNITIES / VACC'S

The development in our 37 VACC's and interest areas is not easy to describe. While we have a few VACC's developing beyond expectations, especially the smaller groups are hardly able to survive.
The major problem seems to be that the suffering groups have melted a size of <u>active</u> members below the needs to staff the entity properly. Therefore, some of them seem to be unable to continue the work or waiting for miracles to solve the problems by "nature". Unfortunately, this is a unfruitful process and we all know that nothing changes if those in charge aren't thinking of new concepts. As a consequence of this, VATEUD is planning to define minimum requirements for a working VACC. We simply can't close our eyes and surely need to help the groups on the lower rim of a working community.
Despite the idea of a few, a VACC is not a national organization in the view of VATSIM. Sure, a VACC setup might need to set some rules up to follow the regulations in the country of the organization, but e.g. native language or borders are not among those requirements. Some "traditional" local rules have to be reinterpreted. Unfortunately, some local communities seem to see their national area as a qualification for becoming a member. This will stop: VATSIM is not intending to support that (according to the rules).
We are one community. Therefore we have to accept members no matter where they are coming from. As long as their qualification fits, they are following the needed local competency and support the local group tasks and communities, there is no reason to keep them out.
Out of that I am currently planning to setup two areas in a first step, combining three VACC's into one, and approx. seven into the second VACC. The setup will be equal to the one working in VATSIM Germany with one staff and regional groups building the staff. This task shall be completed within the next six months.
But there is also sun on the horizon:
A few smaller VACC's started with new life. VATEIR, thanks to the help of Callum, VATEUR4, is now in a fruitful process of activating again after several months of inconsistencies and communication problems. VACC Italy is developing well too. We certainly need to assist in some areas. VATEUD is also happy to see improvements in other local groups not mentioned here.
It is a plan of VATEUD to give VACC's more room to bring them in on division level and with that simply getting more services aligned with the needs of the local communities. And this process also includes the VA's in VATEUD. They find their direct home and partner in the VATEUD Pilots Team.

Member Retention (Laurent Laborde - 1273904)	Members Retention for the 4th quarter of 2014 continues growing with approximately 1900 individual registrations and about 47% of them connected at least once to the network. Within VATEUD we are trying to find new ways for the initial contact with our members that is going to take place within Q1, 2015, allowing them to request directly the local community that they would like to join, and afterwards, details for the community itself are going to be send to the users. We strongly believe that by interacting more with their local facilities, there will be a great rise to the members that get online to the network after the registration.
ATC Training (Mike Welten – 971511)	ATC Training in the fourth quarter draw some good results. With 213 rating recommendations we were able to come close to the number one year ago. 2014 concludes with approx. 700 rating recommendations. This number is nearly equal to those of the twelve months before. ATC Training is a request to the passion of the mentors in the VACCs. They are offering help and investing their evening hours in bringing "newbies" into the ratings. VATEUD acknowledges this huge workload and thanks every mentor for their work to the benefits to the communities in the division. It will be our plan for the next
Pilot Training (VACANT)	For sure, we are searching for a new lead for the Pilot's team. The search had to be postponed until the new division concept is available, which is now in its final stages. With the publication we will also start hiring new leads for the Pilots team. In difference to the former Pilots Training Director role, the new Pilot team lead needs to take tasks equal to his pendant in the ATC section mentioned above. The role requests a communicating manager with ideas, with the guts and abilities to form and lead a team. Most of the tasks in both ATC and Pilots Team will need communication and education skills. With seeing the two directors of the Pilots training leaving the position, we have learned that some of the currently used setups for the pilots training are handcraft jobs. By far, this is nonsense, especially under the aspect that VATEUD hosts this service for other divisions too. For that setup we definitely need a better concept.
Web Services (Vacant)	Without a doubt, IT is the key word for the current development. While leaving API untouched, we slowly but surely set up new IT structures in the division. The tries to find a new IT manager for the Division went unfruitful. Therefore we have to start new projects to get out of the trap. Again, I am more than just thankful that former VATEUD7, Svilen, still supports our division in cases of upcoming problems. Svilen is always a real help and I have to thank him for his great support. The short interlude with Rahul as admin was stopped after not replying on mails and other contacts. Currently, I am running the position of vateud7 parallel to the other tasks. New strategies and new concepts lead into a multiplication of IT services. Especially tasks like the ticket system and a training setup definitely lead to new developments in this area. Therefore we have to find a solution. Our current system requests knowledge in a special coding language. The tries to find someone able to fulfill the duties of a system administrator and developers were unfruitful. In the new setup, we will work with more open languages preventing us from being stuck again in the field. Currently, Andreas VATEUD14 and me are taking care on the new developments and the administration. We have some candidates to work in the setup, but we need to setup the basics on own.

Events
(Daniel Conrad- 1091256)

Within 3rd Quarter of 2013 the events agenda of our vACC's was further enhanced with even more scheduled weekly events for most of the vACC's. Furthermore, coordination started for both the Cross the Pond event as well as the Cross the Mediterranean.

Within 4th Quarter of 2014 the events agenda of the Division had many additions including the Cross the Mediterranean event which was very successful as well as some repeated very popular events as Cross the Pond and Fly and See Santa. Within 2015 we are going to further enhance the divisional events agenda.

VATRUS - Division Director: Evgeny Vygornitsky 862364

Member Retention	Promotion and good advertising of the ongoing events and fly-inns make more pilots to join the network and actively fly online. We are planning to advertise our activity through VAs and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter etc.
ATC Training	Everything is as usual, the amount of the trainees pleases us. We will try to revive the Caucasus direction of ATC coverage.
Pilot Training	VATRUS "Strigino" (UWGG) Training Centre resource has been reopen and is active now. We are able to assign pilot ratings.
Events	Moldova - Belarus - http://forum.vatrus.info/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=264 Moscow RealOps 15.11.14 12-19z - http://forum.vatrus.info/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=270 Brothers Go WEST - http://forum.vatrus.info/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=273 VATRUS Christmas Party! - http://forum.vatrus.info/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=285
Other Comments	

VATUK - Division Director: Kris Thomson 989754

Member Retention (Barrie Joplin 1002707 & Simon Irvine 858680)	Several meetings have been held with Simon Kelsey from BAV regarding a VFR event between both our organisations. This would be cross promoted which should hopefully bring more pilots over from their IVAO member base as well as keeping an interest with our own. The plans are still in their infancy but it is expected that the event will occur sometime in late February. In November we introduced the Membership Questions forum which allows members to ask general questions related to the division and any of it's policies. There has been some initial interest and it is hoped that this will allow members to receive public clarification on various aspects of the division.
ATC Training (Jamie Fox 811029)	We became aware of discussions held during an EC meeting in October regarding possible GRP amendments which would affect major airports and specifically Heathrow in the UK. We liaised with the Europe Region team with feedback and in December received confirmation that the proposed changes would be delayed to allow further consultation with divisions. We will be working with the Region team during Q1 2015 to discuss major airports further and provide input about how we believe changes should be made to improve training.
Pilot Training (Nayan Mehta 1073673)	During Q4 of 2014 the PTD has focused on trying to train as many new mentors as possible, especially in our P2 rating which is currently our busiest course. The PTD conducted 24 P1 sessions, 21 P2 sessions and 7 P3 sessions. There was a slow down due to the festive period, however we aim to start Q1 2015 with a meeting to speak with our mentors and decide a plan from here, this should help to stimulate more activity and get ideas from our mentors as to what they want to see from the staff team.
Operations (Kris Thomson 989754)	The Web Services Team have completed upgrades during the quarter aimed at improving our database and system structures.

Events
(Simon Irvine 858680)

The quarter started with a small inter airport event between Birmingham and Newcastle which was excellent for getting traffic and ATC to a couple of the quieter airports in the Division. This concept will be used in 2015.

As always October brought us Cross The Pond. The Division was lucky enough to have two arrival airfields involved in both Gatwick and Stansted – we had great support and commitment from the RTS staff in the lead up to the event. We have learnt some lessons as to whether one country should have 2 airfields involved and will look at the feedback and decide as to if this is a viable option moving forward.

We had two events in November. One was with our colleagues in VATeir which was a shuttle event between Heathrow and Dublin to celebrate the oldest airline route still in operation in the world. There was also a UK wide cargo event in November with our main cargo airfields, Stansted, East Midlands and Prestwick. This was a popular event with cargo pilots flying in from all over Europe and further afield.

December was a busy month for events. We started the month with one of our VATSIM UK flies to events which are organised by the Pilot Training Department. This event saw pilots fly between Venice and Stansted. December also saw us link up with our Czech colleagues for the first time for an event between Heathrow and Prague. We had excellent feedback from both airfields and we plan to have another event in the summer. We had two events the weekend before Christmas, Manchester held a 10 hour event with link ups featuring other airfields all over Europe and the South West RTS had an event which featured all of their airfields from Bristol to Jersey. The event year was ended in traditional style with the Scottish and Northern Ireland team organising their Hogmanay event, this saw the main airfields in both Scotland and Belfast manned with pilots flying in from far and wide

Other Comments